

LAUNDRY DAY SUMMER SPLASH ACTIVITY

Summer days in Arizona are HOT! Explore the history of this household chore and try your hand at learning how people in the past did their laundry! A fun water activity for outside!

A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF LAUNDRY

Ancient indigenous people living in what is now called Arizona washed their clothing by beating them on river rocks in streams, or using coarse sand or soap made from ashes to scrub out dirt and sweat. In the Sonoran Desert, people used the roots of Soaptree Yucca plants to make soap to clean their clothes and bodies. Ancient Egyptians and Romans did laundry using their feet to stomp out dirt and grime tubs or vats of water. Later, metal or wooden agitators served the same purpose. These ancient people used ash lye, tallow (animal fat), and sometimes human urine (ammonia) to make soap to clean their clothes!



Tools were invented to help us clean our clothes:

washboards, washing bats, agitators and eventually washing machines made laundry much easier. The first washing machine was invented in 1782 by H. Sidgier in Great Britain. By the 1900s most washing machines were motorized, but water often dripped on the motors short circuiting the machines and causing shocks to the user!



NATURAL STAIN REMOVERS

- ❖ **Chalk** – Removing grease and oil
- ❖ **Gasoline** – Cleaning silk
- ❖ **Lemon juice and onion juice** – Lighten stains, used as a bleaching agent
- ❖ **Kerosene** – Remove blood stains
- ❖ **Hog manure** – Bleaching agent
- ❖ **Milk** – Will get rid of urine stains, fruit stains and smells
- ❖ **Human urine** – Bleaching agent because it contains ammonia
- ❖ **Alcohol** – Removing grass stains

ACTIVITY

STEP ONE: Get a bucket, tub or small kiddie pool and fill it with water.

STEP TWO: Pick your soap. 20 Mule Team Borax and Fels-Naptha are two historic laundry soaps that are still available in stores today, but any soap or laundry detergent you have on hand will work. Add a small amount of soap to the water.

STEP THREE: Put your laundry in the soapy water and agitate it with your hands, feet, a clean rock, or another tool until the laundry is clean and the water is dirty.

STEP FOUR: Ring the water out of your laundry, then hang it or lay it flat in the sun to dry.



ARIZONA
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

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Arizona History Museum, Downtown History Museum and Fort Lowell Museum, Tucson
Sanguinetti House Museum & Gardens, Yuma